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ABSTRACT

A school psychologist reviews court cases (Armstrong vs. Kline and Battles vs. Commonwealth of Pennsylvania) and discusses effects of an extended school year on 45 students (mean age 11 years) with severe/profound mental retardation or severe emotional disturbance. Analysis of pre- and posttest levels in 11 developmental areas (gross motor, fine motor, perceptual, conceptual, emotional, social, communication, eating, toileting, dressing, and other self help skills) showed no significant difference between June and August. It is suggested that this finding indicates lack of regression in those skill areas, which is the function of the extended year program. (CL)

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EXTENDED SCHOOL YEAR PROGRAM

INTERMEDIATE UNIT #5

JUNE - AUGUST 1980

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November 18, 1980

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INTRODUCTION

On June 21, 1979, a class action decision for the case entitled Armstrong vs. Kline was entered into through the United States District Court for the Eastern District of Pennsylvania. The issue resolved at that time was the question of an opportunity for a free appropriate public education for children whose handicaps were such that extended breaks in programming due to a 180 day school year caused regression to the point where progress was hindered due to the extensive time required to regain or recoup lost skills. Regression may be defined as a loss of skills, and recoupment refers to the rate of relearning lost skills.

> "The Court ruled that certain handicapped students require in excess of the normal 180 day school year and that any handicapped student who requires such a program is entitled to receive it from the Department of Education and their local school district without cost or other financial liability."[1]

Remedial Order No. 2, was entered September 5, 1979, and included "Exhibit 'A', Guidelines for Identifying School-Aged Persons in Need of Education Programming in Excess of 180 Days Per Year" (hereafter referred to as Guidelines). The guidelines were developed through cooperation between plaintiffs and defendants to delineate the characteristics of children who would benefit from educational programming in excess of 180 days. It was agreed that:

> "A handicapped student is entitled to an education program in excess of 180 days per year if regression caused by interruption in educational programming, together with the student's limited recoupment capacity, render it impossible or unlikely that the student will attain the level of self-sufficiency and independence from caretakers that the student would otherwise be expected to reach in view of his/her handicapping condition."[2]

[1]Guidelines
[2]Remedial Order #2

The Court described two classes of handicapping conditions to be carefully considered. They are:

1) The Severely and Profoundly Impaired by Mental Retardation

2) The Severely Emotionally Disturbed [3]

These classes are further described in the appeal decision of Battles vs. Commonwealth of Pennsylvania as severely or profoundly retarded with probable multiple handicaps and severely emotionally disturbed children who may be autistic, symbiotic, or schizophrenic.

Although no handicapped child is to be overlooked as possibly needing extended programming, the probability is strong that children with less severe handicaps do not evidence a signficant regression/recoupment factor in areas of basic skills required for the development of self-sufficiency and independence from caretakers.[4]

The issue of some regression as normal during a vacation for both handicapped and non-handicapped children is addressed but differentiated from the significant recoupment time needed for the more severely handicapped child. In addition, the focus on self-sufficiency, independence skills and appropriate behavior in relation to the expectancy for the nature of the child's handicap is a crucial factor in the determination of need for extended programming. [5]

[3] Armstrong vs. Kline
[4] ibid.
[5] Guidelines

Remedial Order No. 2 set timelines for implementation for the Extended School Year Program. School districts and Intermediate Units were advised of the possibilities of cooperation with local service agencies which might assist with program needs for individual children.

The United States Court of Appeals for the Third Circuit on July 15, 1980, upheld the decision to implement the extended school year program for eligible persons. The Court of Appeals in its decision, entitled Battles vs. Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, concluded that

> "...inflexible application of a 180 day maximum prevents the proper formulation of appropriate educational goals for individual members of the plaintiff class."[6]

The mandate for an extended school year for certain handicapped individuals is thus clearly stated to the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania.

[6]Battles vs. Commonwealth

IDENTIFICATION OF CHILDREN

The first step in the identification of children eligible for an extended school year was notification of parents of the Court decision and their right to request review of their child's needs. Within the Intermediate Unit, districts which provide diagnostic services and special education programs completed both this phase and the review phase utilizing their local personnel with consultation from the Intermediate Unit. Programs which receive direct diagnostic and instructional services from the Intermediate Unit were reviewed by Intermediate Unit staff.

The Intermediate Unit #5 notified the parents of 1,120 children of the Armstrong vs. Kline decision and the right to review their child's needs for possible extended programming. 100 parents responded with requests to review IEP's, 32 responded that they did not wish to have the IEP's reviewed, and 988 did not respond. Team reviews of IEP's were held for the students whose parents had requested the service, and further data was gathered from parents and teachers.

A review team was formed for the students serviced through the Intermediate Unit according to the State Standards for a multidisciplinary team to review all special education placements.[7] This team consisted of the Director of Special Education, the Assistant Director/Diagnostics of Special Education, two special education supervisors, and one psychologist. The team members met to review all requests and IEP's and then worked in smaller groups in conjunction with special education classroom teachers and school district

[7]Armstrong vs. Kline

administrators to gather additional data for the students. Speech therapists and other specialists met with review teams when appropriate.

Each IEP was reviewed to ascertain needs which were addressed by goals and objectives in the area of self-sufficiency, independence from caretakers, appropriate behavior, and possible critical points of learning in skill areas germane to the court decision which would be affected by a break in programming. Information was also gathered regarding abilities of families to assist with instruction and the needs for certain pupils to utilize time outside the classroom to generalize their skills and behaviors.[8]

Parents of children who were determined to be in need of an extended school year program were notified and informed of plans to develop an IEP extension of goals and objectives. Following a determination that a child's goals, objectives, and current progress were not within the guidelines of the Armstrong vs. Kline decision, parents were so notified and given the opportunity to question that decision through standard due process procedures.

[8] Armstrong vs. Kline

PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT

The Extended School Year IEPs (ESY-IEP) were written prior to actual program development. General categories of possible service ranging from residential programming to parental support consultation had been hypothesized although the ESY-IEP was written by parents, a program supervisor, a teacher, and a psychologist. Goals and objectives addressed by the court decision were incorporated into the ESY-IEP. Attention was given to provisions for direct instruction, parent consultation, opportunities to generalize skills, and modifications of summer programs which had previously been attended by some students.

Following the completion of all ESY-IEPs by school districts and the Intermediate Unit, the children were grouped by needs and geographical area to facilitate staffing patterns and programs. Within the area of Intermediate Unit #5 a need was shown for itinerant in-the-home instruction throughout the three counties, for residential instruction in one private licensed residential facility, and cooperative instruction with one approved private school and one Mental Retardation Base Service Unit. Support services included speech therapy, physical therapy, adaptive physical education, and transportation.

The Intermediate Unit supervised the Extended School Year Program for all students within the three counties. A total of ten teachers, one speech therapist, two teacher aides, and one home/school visitor were involved.

A total of 58 students were served with 16 involved in itinerant programs, 29 in the residential facility, 9 through the approved private school, and 4 in the Mental Retardation Base Service Unit Program.

Curriculum needs for the itinerant pupils were those of self-help behavior and communication. The parents were invited to participate in the lessons and carry through skill maintenance between scheduled teacher visits. The children receiving itinerant instruction were seen approximately three times per week by the teachers. The pupils enrolled in the Mental Retardation Base Service Unit Program were at day camp five days per week and received instruction through the ESY Program at that setting with appropriate behaviors and self-care. The children in the residential facility received reinforcement of objectives dealing with basic communication skills, feeding, toileting, and social interaction. The private school offered a summer program within which the ESY children received special help with social interaction, appropriate behaviors, and self-care.

At each setting, children were given special assistance according to the goals and objectives of individual ESY-IEPs. Specialized instruction given by support personnel was scheduled to coincide with the child's program attendance. This schedule enabled the support services to be closely integrated with instruction. Home-School Visitor services were provided for the families of children involved in the summer programs. Parents and care-takers were helped to communicate their needs and carry out tasks with their children in the home. Parents of children in the itinerant programs were given telephone numbers where they could contact their child's teacher for consultation.

EVALUATION OF PUPIL PROGRESS

The Verna Hart Checklist was chosen as an evaluation instrument because it offered both a discriminatory criterion guide for assessment and a developmental reference which could be adapted numerically for data. Ratings were completed by the teachers with assistance from the psychologist involved with the ESY Program. The ESY psychologist scored all protocols. The scores were derived from intratest clusters corresponding to developmental age levels in eleven major categories. The developmental age was computed by calculating the highest age level of successive skills. Moderate scatter beyond that point was interpolated to adjust the developmental age. Minimal scatter was judged according to the skill rated and either included within the successive tasks or added to appropriately increase the developmental age. The mean average of the eleven categories was used as an overall developmental age for each child.

The evaluation study was conducted on a population of forty-five students. Thirteen students were excluded from the study due to insufficient data, inability to complete the program as described in the IEP for either medical reasons, or substantial absence due to vacation or other family circumstances. Of the forty-five pupils, thirty-eight were involved in center-based programs in either a private licensed facility or an approved private school. Seven received instruction in the home.

SAMPLE POPULATION

Combined total	Center-Based	Itinerant
N=45	N=38	N=7

TABLE 1

The average mean age of the students participating in the ESY Program was eleven years, six months. The mean average developmental age of the group was twelve months as calculated by the checklist described above. The mean developmental age of center-based pupils was nine months and of those receiving instruction in the home, twenty-seven months. Examination of data indicated that the majority of students involved were approximately ten to fourteen

CHRONOLOGICAL AGE IN YEARS - MONTHS - JUNE, 1980

	Combined Total	Center Based	Itinerant
$\bar{X}$	11-6	10-11	14-8
MED	11-0	10-0	12-9
MODE	12	9	---
(Rounded)	10	12	

TABLE 2

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DEVELOPMENTAL AGE IN MONTHS

	Combined Total		Center Based		Itinerant	
	June	August	June	August	June	August
$\bar{X}$	12.02	12.02	9.26	9.26	27.03	27.03
MED	9	9	5	5	26	26
MODE	3	3	3	3	26	26

TABLE 3

years of age. The developmental age average for center-based pupils was nine months with a modal developmental age of three months. This mean average was skewed by a few pupils who were older and adept at many of the skills on the checklist. The itinerant population appears more homogeneous with both mean

and mode at twenty-six to twenty-seven months. It may be assumed that the higher level of previously-acquired skills possessed by those receiving services at home contributes to both appropriate service delivery and to the statistical differences noted in the combined total developmental ages. Developmental ages from pre-and post-testing for each of the eleven skill areas as rated in June and August are listed below. Skew is observed from the median and mode toward a higher average in the areas of dressing and other self-help skills for the center-based population and in gross motor, fine motor, and conceptual areas for the itinerant population. A breakdown of those may be found in Table 5. The average for the combined total also reflect the influence of the larger number of pupils enrolled in center-based programs whose developmental levels are lower than those involved with in-the-home instruction.

Evaluation of data shows minimal gains in several areas which are not significant. One student progressed in the area of behavior control, one in self-help knowledge, and two in motoric skills. All students showed maintainence in all areas, and no regression was noted either qualitatively or statistically.

DEVELOPMENTAL AGE BY SKILL AREA IN MONTHS

	Combined Total		Center Based		Itinerant	
	June	August	June	August	June	August
Gross Motor	15.27	15.30	12.84	12.87	30.67	30.67
Fine Motor	14.45	14.45	11.53	11.53	30.29	30.29
Perceptual	10.58	10.58	11.53	11.53	24.86	24.86
Conceptual	11.84	11.87	7.42	7.45	35.86	35.86
Emotional	11.37	11.37	9.68	9.68	20.57	20.57
Social	10.40	10.42	8.61	8.63	20.14	20.14
Communication	8.95	8.95	7.00	7.00	21.33	21.33
Eating	15.13	15.13	12.76	12.76	30.17	30.17
Toileting	11.21	11.21	9.47	9.47	26.40	26.40

	June	August	June	August	June	August
Dressing	11.77	11.77	8.58	8.58	36.00	36.00
Other Self-Help	8.37	8.37	6.00	6.00	26.40	26 40

TABLE 4

DEVELOPMENTAL AGE BY SKILL AREA 11
(months)

	COMBINED TOTAL						CENTER BASED						ITINERANT					
	June 1980			August			June 1980			August			June 1980			August		
	$\bar{X}$	M	Mo	$\bar{X}$	M	Mo	$\bar{X}$	M	Mo	$\bar{X}$	M	Mo	$\bar{X}$	M	Mo	$\bar{X}$	M	Mo
Gross Motor	15.27	9	2	15.30	9	2	12.84	7	2	12.87	7	2	30.67	36	-	30.67	36	-
Fine Motor	14.45	9	3	14.45	9	3	11.53	9	3	11.53	9	3	30.29	30	-	30.29	30	-
Perceptual	10.58	22	2	10.58	4	2	7.95	4	2	7.95	4	2	24.86	30	36	24.86	30	36
Conceptual	11.84	1	1	11.87	1	1	7.42	1	1	7.45	1	1	35.86	42	-	35.86	42	-
Emotional	11.37	6	4	11.37	7	4	9.68	5	4	9.68	5	4	20.57	18	18	20.57	18	18
Social	10.40	5	2	10.42	5	2	8.61	4	2	8.63	4	2	20.14	13	4	20.14	13	4
Communication	8.95	4	4	8.95	4	4	7	4	4	7	4	4	21.33	20	20	21.33	20	20
Eating	15.13	8	18	15.13	9	18	12.76	6	18	12.76	6	18	30.17	33	48	30.17	33	48
Toileting	11.21	7	7	11.21	7	7	9.47	7	7	9.47	7	7	24.40	36	36	24.40	36	36
Dressing	11.77	0	0	11.77	0	0	8.58	0	0	8.58	0	0	36	48	0	36	48	0
Other Self-Help	8.37	0	0	8.37	0	0	6	0	0	6	0	0	26.40	42	42	26.40	42	42

TABLE 5

CONCLUSIONS

The purpose of the Extended School Year Program for handicapped students is to prevent regression for the individuals and skills described in the Armstrong vs. Kline Court Order. It may be assumed that there will be no significant difference in the pupil attainments as recorded in June, 1980 compared to those recorded in August, 1980.

A t-test was completed using the mean averages of Table 4 to compare the eleven major developmental area levels of center-based students, itinerant students, and total students during the time period between June and August. The results of this t-test showed no significant difference at the .05 level of confidence between any of the pre-and post-test data. It may be assumed that the lack of significant difference between the pupil levels from June compared to August is due to a lack of regression in the skill areas measured by the checklist. Individual progress was noted for a few students, however, the degree of attainment was not measurable within the groups or as a whole population to a statistically significant degree.

The specific charge of the program was to identify children in need of an extended school year who were potentially liable to experience a regression/recoupment factor to such an extent as to prevent the progress expected from the handicapping condition and to provide a free appropriate public educational program to prevent this phenomenom. The results of the evaluation indicate that all students maintained the skills which they had acquired at the end of the school year in those areas addressed in the Court order. The conclusion

may be drawn that both identification procedures and program designs were effective in meeting the needs of these individuals. The regression of skills was prevented for each pupil and should, therefore, eliminate the recoupment time necessary to regain a loss. Thus, each student may approach the beginning of the school year with the prior learning needed to advance as far as possible toward the independence and self-sufficiency described in the Court order of Armstrong vs. Kline.

REFERENCES

Armstrong vs. Kline
Remedial Order No. 2
Exhibit A: Guidelines
Battles vs. Commonwealth

APPENDIX